8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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Consequently, rural ceremony signalizes the event. Custom brings together those concerned, for rejoicing, for recognition of the place of the newcomer in the group, for an expression of the sentiments that unite them all. The rural 'christening' is no mere idle jollification; it is a secular baptism, as important for social life as is the Sacrament of Baptism for religion. Naturally, then, fairy-belief is represented very strongly. It surrounds the crucial event of birth and its consequences with a hundred necessities of action which carry with them powerful emotional dispositions. Fear, awe, wonder, religious feeling, and plain caution can all be pressed into service to mould the countryman into an acceptance of the new state of affairs; the logic of belief fits these emotions into the countryman's world-view.

The good people are particularly active at such times as this. Every association with birth is infused with power and danger. Even the midwife who attends becomes a magic figure; the aura that surrounds the dangerous and crucial event invests her entire personality. She can command the fairies, disperse their attacks, travel through the air, transfer labour pains at will to a truculent or negligent husband. She is in communication with the fairy powers; in tale and story she often finds her ministrations commandeered by them and her person wafted off into the forts and raths to attend a fairy-woman there. She herself may deny all this; but it

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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181 is true, none the less, in belief. Like all else at birth,
183 she is linked to the good people, and in the linkage
776 an explanation is given for the identity of the
● 844 emotional associations which surround both her and them.

181 Similarly, all other crucial changes in social life,
183 as well as those of the religious life, come to fit into
776 the same scheme for many of the country-people
852 who still follow the old tradition. The good people figure in them all.

Thus, First Communion and Confirmation—events of first magnitude in the life of the devout countryman—bring changes in emotional well-being; they bestow a real, if mysterious and holy, strength. This, of course, is first of all a part of religious experience. But the events are also accompanied, in the countryside, by changes in one's relations to one's fellows, in traditional social organization. The child is separated first from others of opposite sex after First Communion; he is introduced to full farm work and, very often, leaves school after Confirmation. His fellows in family and community must henceforward have a new regard for him and treat him differently. So, in these changes, the good people have their role, too. Precautions against their influence reinforce one's dependence upon a symbolic order which incorporates these changes. They make definite and unforgettable the magnitude of the change and the new dispositions which must be learned. Thus,

Again, emotion is enlisted in the fashioning of social habit.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

585 "straw-boys" go round with long straw masks on, and if they do not get either money or liquor will threaten to break the windows and furniture of the house. The women marry very young, from fifteen
582 years upwards; and, if not settled in life by twenty or so, they usually emigrate.

● 844 Infants are given butter immediately after birth, and are carefully watched, lest they should be "taken away" or changed. For some similar reason a parturient woman has a string tied round the wrist or one of the fingers. All the wood in a house is carefully put outside if
763 the death of one of the inmates is thought to be imminent; and if it should occur the neighbours dread to give wood to make the coffin, as they believe that the person who does so will be the next to die; and if the plank of which the coffin is to be made is not taken down from the loft where it generally is, before the person dies, no inducement can make them use it for the purpose. The people never bury their
764 dead on a Monday, nor on the day of the week in which the Feasts of the Holy Innocents has fallen for that year. They have a great
[762] horror of suicides, and believe that if one were to be buried in the graveyard it would cause the other corpses to turn over on their faces.

A wake is held the night before the funeral, on those who have died abroad or been lost at sea, when the news arrives; but owing to
[178] the influence brought to bear on the people by the clergy in this matter, it is now only attended by relatives of the deceased, and the character of the ceremony is much altered, most of the old games, the mock marriage, &c., being altogether obsolete, while the insobriety, formerly common, is now a thing of the past. At the funeral the coffin
[482] is carried out the back door, and is followed by the mourners. On reaching the graveyard it is carried thrice round the old church in the direction of the sun, and as soon as the grave is reached all those attending the funeral scatter and go to pray at the graves of their own relatives, which, having done, they raise the keen, beginning at the person farthest from the open grave.

The Rev. E. O'Growney, who has generously placed at my disposal a number of notes taken during a visit to these islands, thus describes a funeral he witnessed in Inishbofin:—"The old Irish funeral *caoine* is still used in its full perfection. I happened to be engaged in the church of St. Colman, deciphering a peculiar Latin inscription there, when a large number of people, chiefly women, brought the body of an infant for interment. While the body was being interred the women
764 scattered about the churchyard, each going to the grave of her own
533 friends. Those farthest from the newly-made grave began a low

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

585 [777] [273] The good luck of the bottle race referred to above may be associated with the 'agreement bottle' of whiskey which was drunk, according to a seventeenth-century account, when the parents and relations of the young couple had reached a marriage agreement.[1] To this day in parts of Co. Down 'running for the broth' is a feature of country marriages, a bowl of broth being the reward given to the person who reaches the bride's house first after the wedding. Until recently, also, the young couple were expected to appear at the Bride's Show on the first Sunday after their marriage: they were accompanied to a special sloping field where they ran hand-in-hand to a stone near the bottom of the field, followed by pairs of linked boys and girls, each boy kissing the stone. Games and what was described to us as 'general carrying on' followed the Bride's Show.[2]

584 In more remote parts of the country match-making is still a recognized procedure. The professional match-maker is a well-known figure, usually a shrewd elderly person well versed in the arts of rural diplomacy, and his role has been fully described by Arensberg. He acts for the farmer who is ready for his son to marry—the son being often well into middle age—by negotiating with the parents of the girl whom the farmer has selected. In the prolonged bargaining as to the amount of the 'fortune' which the girl is to bring with her the values of peasant living stand clearly revealed.[3] Marriage is not so much a personal relationship as a union between groups, reinforcing relations which extend far beyond individuals.

There was a popular belief that the curse of sterility could be placed on the bride by any ill-disposed person who tied knots in a string during the marriage ceremony. A more obvious example of magic was the custom of tying a hen which was about to lay an egg to the bed-post on the marriage night.

[585] There are widespread traditions of the days when landlords exercised the *jus primae noctis* over their tenants' wives, and one hears of leases which contained clauses governing the right.

844 During pregnancy it was lucky to do certain things and to avoid

[1] Sir Henry Piers, *West-Meath*, 1, 122.
[2] E. E. Evans, *Mourne Country*, 198
[3] C. M. Arensberg, *The Irish Countryman*, ch. 3.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

doing others; and there is simple symbolic magic in the act of blowing the bellows in a forge to ensure safe delivery. In Mayo a ploughman would be called in to lift and shake a woman in difficult labour,[1] and there are hints of the *couvade* in the custom of wearing the husband's jacket during childbirth in the belief that he will then bear some of the pain. Mothers and babies were thought to be especially liable to be abducted by the fairies, and protective charms were hidden in a baby's dress or placed in the cradle. When children were taken to be baptised, too, special preparations were made and precautions taken, for example, a Co. Antrim clergyman reported that his parishioners would place a piece of bread and cheese in the child's clothing.[2] The old custom of dressing boys in girls' clothes, in long frocks, until they were ten or eleven years of age has been explained as a means of deceiving the fairies, who were always on the lookout for healthy young boys whom they could replace by feeble 'changelings'. For the same reason it is unwise to praise a child without adding a saving 'God bless him', and young boys are still half jocularly referred to as 'rogues and tories'. The belief in 'changelings' may have arisen as an explanation of the high mortality rate among baby boys as compared with girls.

When we come to the topic of the omens and rites of death and burial the supernatural world is ever-present. The custom of opening windows and doors to let the spirit of the dead depart is well known: in addition a hole was sometimes made in the roof thatch. Of Co. Sligo early last century we read: 'As soon as the breath has departed from a sick person, the bed is carried out, and if there be high ground near the house, it is there set on fire and consumed to ashes, while the air resounds with doleful cries.'[3] When death was imminent the sick person was laid on the floor, for this was believed to ease the escaping spirit. Two persons of the household should take part in every necessary task at this time, and two persons were sent out to carry news of the death, traditionally to the livestock and the bees as well as to the neighbours. Great care was taken to

[1] C. R. Browne, *The Mullet*.
[2] Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 2, 39.
[3] W. Shaw Mason, *Parochial Survey*, 2, 368.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

returned to its original position.'[1] St. Olan's Stone is a boulder bearing impressions which are regarded as being the imprint of the saint's feet. Many such marked stones, including some which are clearly artificial basin stones, have been regarded with superstitious awe up and down the country and were generally interpreted as the result of a saint's kneeling or standing on the spot. It is natural to suppose that these hagiological interpretations were substituted for another set of beliefs which attached the virtues of strength, healing and fertility to cup-marked stones.

Not infrequently cup-holes are found bored through thin slabs of stones, and these 'holed stones' are invested with aphrodisiac powers. We have referred to the ceremonies associated with the Ardmore stone in Chapter XIX, and the practice of erecting a stick or pole in similar stones at one of the major festivals is recorded from other localities. Wood-Martin wrote of the Hole Stone at Doagh, Co. Antrim: 'Marriage contracts are still ratified at this spot, as country couples go there to signify their betrothal by clasping hands through the hole.' Again, 'at the holed-stone of Clocnapeacaib, county Cork, women were in the habit of drawing some of their clothes through a hole, when their confinement was approaching, to secure a favourable result, and a similar practice is followed in many other localities of women similarly situated drawing clothes through the perforated arms of ancient Irish circular-headed stone crosses'[2] (Pl. 15, 1).

Before leaving this subject I should refer to certain cup-marks which have been utilized down to recent times for the purpose of making stone balls for the game of 'bullet-throwing'. Played along the country roads, and now prohibited in Northern Ireland because it endangers traffic, its main home is in Co. Cork, where it is known as bowling. One will occasionally surprise a game in progress in the Belfast hills or around Slieve Gullion in Co. Armagh, and it is here that stone bullets were manufactured within living memory. The 'bullet-holes', three to four inches in diameter and an inch or two deep, are worn in the flat tops of boulders in the process of hammering into a

[1] P. J. Hartnett, *Béaloideas*, 10 (1941), 108.
[2] Wood-Martin, *Elder Faiths*, 2, 239–42.

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

593 602 —with a strong agnatic bias. Rights and duties are distributed among cognates, but they are less strong among uterine and affinal kin, as well as among relatives of both lines according to distance from ego. Rights and duties include obligations to assist and defend, and mutual assistance in Inis Beag characterizes farming, fishing, housebuilding, unloading turf, carrying the coffin at a funeral, and many other activities. Reciprocation in some form for services rendered is almost an obsession among both kin and non-kin, and not to reciprocate adequately means to lose face. The matter of mutual defense will be considered in later sections and chapters.

551 Only 13 surnames are represented on the island, and there are 27 families bearing a single one, 11 bearing another, and 8 a third. Most Christian names are those of the Blessed Virgin and of saints, especially from the Irish past. Michael, Patrick, Sean (which often is transformed into John, although Eoin is John in Irish), Thomas, Martin, Peter, Coleman, and Joseph—in that order—are the most popular first names for males, while for females it is Mary, Brigid, Margaret, Ann, [B44] Catherine, Sarah, Nora, and Teresa. In the past, it was customary for Inis Beag [197] women to bear their offspring at home attended by nurse, midwife, or skilled female relative; but during the past decade, most infants have been delivered in the mainland hospital serving the island, where mothers have learned of "different" surnames and have assigned them to their own children—such as Gerard, Xavier, Christopher, and Pius for boys, and Rita, Carmel, Veronica, and Jude for girls.

601 561 Each person in the island has a term of reference which never is employed as a term of address.[2] For a man, it is a nickname or his Christian name followed by that of his father: "The General" or Sean Michael. Women ordinarily are not given nicknames; if single, they append their father's first name to their own, and if married, their husband's. An adult man may bear the Christian name of his mother following his own rather than his father's, if, for instance, his mother was widowed early or unduly dominated her husband. Nicknames relate to such things as occupations, abodes, personality idiosyncracies, stature, color of hair, and events of the past; and many are uncomplimentary to the degree of fomenting disputes if uttered at improper times or to inappropriate persons.

155 593 Before turning to reciprocal relationships which exist between certain agnatic, uterine, and affinal relatives, it is necessary to examine two phenomena which have a vital bearing on kinship and other behavior: the Oedipus complex and male solidarity. Fr. Alexander J. Humphreys says that there is in Ireland a ". . . centripetal mechanism built into the fabric of rural life. This is the strong, preferential love of the rural mother for her sons. She is a magnetic center of the family and her cohesive power is affection. This love, which leads her 'to slave' for her sons and to demand that her daughters do likewise, cushions the sons' hard lot. It mollifies the constant rub of his subordination to his father . . ."

[2] A term of reference is a name used to refer to a person who is not present, while a term of address is a name used to address a person to his face. In America, one might say in referring to his mother, "That woman walking toward us is my mother.", and then greet her as she joins the group, "Hi, Mom."; in this case, mother is a term of reference and Mom a term of address. Often terms of address in the Western world are Christian names, and some terms of reference and address may be identical. Anthropologists usually collect only terms which are used to designate various kin.

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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chism? Ussher addresses his remarks more directly to the sexual implications of Jansenism.

> Certainly the puritanic bias of the Church in Ireland surprises visitors from other Catholic communities. It is often said that Irish schools and seminaries in the last century were infected with the remnants of Jansenism. . . . The dismal fact remains that Irishmen tend to regard procreation as a shameful necessity, and Irish girls grow up to think of sex as something dark, cold, and forbidding. Statistics are scarcely available, but it seems to me that the word "dirty" is used in modern Ireland in one sense only, namely, to cover every manifestation, even the most natural, of sex passion. . . . Irish married couples seldom give the impression of being biologically satisfied or even awakened; and if they are not, it may partly account for the slovenly, listless, don't care rather than devil-may-care quality of Irish life—the "spit" but never the "polish" (O'Brien 1953: 161-162).

It is interesting to note that Ussher, an Irishman, uses the word "puritanic." I have been severely criticized by Irish readers for using it in this and previous works, since it refers to an English religious movement as well as Cromwell's party.

The editor presents an equally down-to-earth pronouncement of the effects of Jansenism.

> Here Father Murphy has singled out a factor of enormous importance in explaining the grotesque proportion of bachelors and spinsters among the Irish: the typical Irish attitude toward marriage, which, as he and many other priests have suggested, would seem to have an underlying touch of Jansenism. That attitude looks upon marriage and sex as rather regrettable necessities in the propagation of the race: it would have been much better if God had arranged for offspring in some other way. Irish parents shy away from the distasteful task of lifting the veil upon this earthy, unappetizing, and somewhat unclean subject (O'Brien 1953: 105).

The plea for a less "distasteful" manner of reproduction was actually voiced by several Inis Beag women; and most island parents do not lift the "veil," in part because of their own ignorance of sexual matters.

The impact of the Oedipus complex on Irish character has been explored by cultural analysts and writers almost from the time Freud first conceptualized the phenomenon. Indeed, Freud might have been describing Ireland rather than a particular class in Austria at the turn of the century (just as Marx might have had Ireland in mind when positing religion as the opiate of the oppressed masses). Two recent con-